WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for searching a database, the method executing in a system including a user input device and a user output device, the method comprising

accepting first and second search terms from the user input device, wherein the second term is associated with a predetermined list of two or more names;

identifying documents from the database that satisfy the first search term;

determining the frequency of occurrence of the two or more names in the identified documents; and

presenting at least a portion of the identified documents to a user by using the output device, wherein the presented identified documents are ordered according to the determined frequency of occurrence of the two or more names.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined list of names is created at least in part by receiving signals from a user interface.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined list of names is created at least in part by receiving signals from a process.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the second term is selected from a list of context names.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein identifying documents includes

sending a database query to a database server; and

receiving search results from the database server.

6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the search results include document identifiers.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the first search term includes one or more of a condition, operator, symbol, name, phrase, keyword, wild card.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein determining includes

searching the identified documents to determine if a name is present in a document.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein searching includes

pre-compiling a list of identifiers for documents in which a name occurs; and

comparing the identified documents with documents identified in the pre-compiled list to determine matches.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein presentation of documents includes listing document identifiers on a display screen in decreasing order of the frequency of occurrence of the two or more names.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein indicating a search result further includes

ordering a list of the two or more associated terms according to a frequency of occurrence of the associated terms in the items.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the user output device includes a display device, the method further comprising

displaying the associated terms along with the number of items in which an associated term occurs.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising

automatically defining two or more terms associated with the second term.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising

accepting signals from a user input device to define two or more terms associated with the second term.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the second term includes the keyword "genes" and wherein an associated term includes a gene name.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the second term includes the keyword "regions" and wherein an associated term includes a region name.

17. A method for searching a database having items, the method executing in a system including a user input device and a user output device, the method comprising

accepting first and second search terms from the user input device, wherein two or more associated terms are associated with the second search term; and

indicating a search result with the user output device, wherein the search result includes an indication of an amount of the items from the database that satisfy both the first search term and the associated search terms.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the second search term includes a name.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the second search term includes a phrase.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the second search term includes a symbol.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the second search term includes a rule.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the second search term includes an operator.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein the second search term includes a function.

24. An apparatus for searching a database, the apparatus comprising

a processor coupled to a user input device and a user output device;

a machine-readable medium including instructions for execution by the processor, the machine-readable medium including:

one or more instructions for accepting first and second search terms from the user input device, wherein the second term is associated with a predetermined list of two or more names;

one or more instructions for identifying documents from the database that satisfy the first search term;

one or more instructions for determining the frequency of occurrence of the two or more names in the identified documents;

one or more instructions for presenting at least a portion of the identified documents to a user by using the output device, wherein the presented identified documents are ordered according to the determined frequency of occurrence of the two or more names.

25.   An apparatus for searching a database, the apparatus comprising

a processor coupled to a user input device and a user output device;

means for accepting first and second search terms from the user input device, wherein the second term is associated with a predetermined list of two or more names;

means for identifying documents from the database that satisfy the first search term;

means for determining the frequency of occurrence of the two or more names in the identified documents;

means for presenting at least a portion of the identified documents to a user by using the output device, wherein the presented identified documents are ordered according to the determined frequency of occurrence of the two or more names.

26.   A machine-readable medium including instructions executable by a processor for searching a database, the machine-readable medium comprising

one or more instructions for accepting first and second search terms from the user input device, wherein the second term is associated with a predetermined list of two or more names;

one or more instructions for identifying documents from the database that satisfy the first search term;

one or more instructions for determining the frequency of occurrence of the two or more names in the identified documents;

one or more instructions for presenting at least a portion of the identified documents to a user by using the output device, wherein the presented identified documents are ordered according to the determined frequency of occurrence of the two or more names.

27.   A method for performing a search of an originating database search, the method comprising

accepting first and second search terms, wherein the second search term includes associated search terms;

using the first search term to obtain first search results from an originating database; and

using the associated terms to perform a search of the first search results to obtain second search results.

28.   A method for performing a search of a database, the method comprising

accepting first and second search terms from a user input device, wherein two or more associated terms are associated with the second search term;

using the first search term to obtain first search results from an originating database;

using the associated terms to perform a search of the first search results to obtain second search results; and

indicating a search result with a user output device, wherein the search result includes an indication of an amount of the items from the database that satisfy both the first search term and the associated search terms.

29.   A method for performing a search of an originating database, the method comprising

accepting signals at a first processor to create a context definition, wherein the context definition includes one or more associated terms;

associating a context definition name with the context definition;

sending the context definition to a second processor for selection by a user in a database search, whereby the one or more associated terms are used in connection with a user search term to perform a search of the originating database.